



Chesapeake Challenge Competition

Hosted by

Crisfield Heritage Festival

Saturday, October 10, 2026 @ 10:30 AM



SPECIES LIST – WARD CHESAPEAKE CHALLENGE

■ MARSH DUCKS

- Black ducks
- Blue-winged teals
- Cinnamon teal
- Gadwalls
- Green-winged teals
- Mallards
- Pintails
- Shovelers
- Wigeons
- Wood ducks
- All Others

■ DIVING DUCKS

- Buffleheads
- Canvasbacks
- Common mergansers
- Eiders
- Goldeneyes
- Hooded mergansers
- Long-tailed ducks
- Red-breasted mergansers
- Redheads
- Ring-necked ducks
- Ruddy ducks
- Scaups
- Scoters
- All Others

■ GEESE & CONFIDENCE

- Brants
- Geese
- Swans
- Coots
- Grebes
- Confidence & all others

■ SHOREBIRDS

- Avocets, Oystercatchers, Stilts
- Curlews, Whimbrels, Godwits
- Plovers
- Yellowlegs/Willetts
- Peeps
- Turnstones, Dowitchers & Knots
- All other shorebirds

■ WOODPECKERS

- All species

■ OTHER WILDFOWL

- Egrets, Herons
- Ducks, Geese, Confidence
- Owls, Crows
- Doves
- Seabirds: Terns, Gulls, Phalaropes
- Misc.

■ CONTEMPORARY ANTIQUE

- Wood Duck

■ CAPTAIN RUSSELL FISH AWARD

- Black Duck

AWARDS:

■ Floating

- Ribbons will be awarded for First, Second, Third, and Honorable Mention in each Floating Classification (species).
- Rosettes will be awarded for First, Second and Third in Categories: Marsh Ducks, Diving Ducks, Geese & Confidence.
- Best of Show Floating will receive First Place rosette, \$100 and plaque.
- Second Best of Show Floating will receive Second Place rosette, \$50 and plaque.
- Third Best of Show Floating will receive Third Place rosette, \$25 and plaque.

■ Shorebirds— Sponsorship Available

- Ribbons will be awarded for First, Second, Third in Shorebird Categories. Ribbons will be awarded for Honorable Mention.
- Best of Show Shorebirds will receive First Place rosette, \$50 and plaque.
- Second Best of Show Shorebirds will receive Second Place rosette, \$25 and plaque.
- Third Best of Show Shorebirds will receive Third place rosette, \$10 and plaque.

■ Other Wildfowl— Sponsorship Available

- Ribbons will be awarded for First, Second, Third in Categories. Ribbons will be awarded for Honorable Mention.
- Best of Show Other Wildfowl will receive First Place rosette, \$50 and plaque.
- Second Best of Show Other Wildfowl will receive Second Place rosette, \$25 and plaque.
- Third Best of Show Other Wildfowl will receive Third place rosette, \$10 and plaque.

■ Woodpecker- Sponsorship Available

- Best of Show Woodpecker will receive a rosette, \$50 and plaque.
- Second and Third Best in Show Woodpecker will receive rosettes.

■ Captain Russell Fish Gunning Decoy Award- Sponsored by R.W. Smoker

- Best in Species will receive a plaque and \$25.

■ Youth - 17 and under – Sponsorship Available

- The competition will be divided into five categories: Marsh Ducks, Diving Ducks, Geese and Confidence, Shorebirds, and Woodpeckers. The rules for each category will be the same as they are in the Chesapeake Challenge. First, Second, and Third Best of Show will be chosen from the categories.
- Best in Show will receive a rosette and plaque.

- Second and Third Best in Show will receive a rosette.

- Ribbons will be given to First, Second, Third in categories and to Honorable Mentions. Youth Special Award for overall Floating. \$50 to 1st place, \$25 to 2nd place and \$10 to 3rd place.

RULES:

1. Enter what you have made and what you use for hunting. Previously entered birds are not eligible for competition.
2. Decoys can be made of wood, cork, stretched canvas, palm fronds, or other local materials. **Plastic and foam are not allowed.**
3. Carving should be simple and without fragile areas. If you need an insert (example: tails of pintails and oldsquaws), hardwood, leather, or plastic will be allowed.
4. Painting should be simple and basic. Feathers should be simply applied brush strokes, with NO COMPLEX BLENDING. Scratch and comb vermiculation is allowed.
5. All decoys should be painted in winter plumage, except Shorebirds, which can be in any plumage.
6. When in question whether to "go too far," remember, SIMPLICITY TAKES PRECEDENCE.
7. Decoys will all be judged at a distance and up close. Judges will be handling the decoys. Judges final decisions will be made at 20 feet.
8. All floating decoys must have a means to tie an anchor line to, however, weights and anchors are not needed. Shorebirds must have rod for standing. Woodpecker method to attach to a nail.
9. All Marsh Ducks and Geese & Confidence decoys should self-right from side position; Diving Ducks should do so from any position.
10. All types of Woodpeckers are admissible in the Woodpecker Category. No decorative carving or painting or bases. Split wings are allowed. All entries will be hung on a plank (our woodpecker board) for judging purposes.
11. Other birds that were historically used as decoys will be entered under Other Wildfowl.
12. Decoys entered in previous Chesapeake Challenge Competitions are ineligible.

R.B. SMOKER CONTEMPORARY ANTIQUE DECOY – 2026 SPECIES: Wood Duck -----

Entries are to emulate the appearance of decoys that were carved before 1950 and would have been used for hunting. Decoys will be judged in hand. Each year there will be one species to be entered into the competition. – Sponsored by R.W. Smoker & R.K. Smoker in memory of their dad R.B. Smoker

RULES:

1. Entries must be signed and dated.
2. Entries can be inspired by old decoys from geographic areas but must be the carver's original design and interpretation of an "old" decoy. Entries can be inspired by old decoys.
3. Decoys should be made to look old by the manner in which they are carved, painted, and finished.

AWARDS: Best of Show will receive a rosette, \$50 and a plaque. Second and Third Best of Show will receive rosettes

CAPTAIN RUSSEL FISH GUNNING DECOY AWARD – 2026 SPECIES: Black Duck-----

Species will rotate each year from the Challenge Categories.-Sponsored by R.W. Smoker

AWARDS: Best of Species will receive a plaque and \$25.

WINNING DECOYS:

The three Best of Show Floating Decoys, three Best of Show Shorebirds, the Best of Show Woodpecker, Best in Show Other Wildfowl, Best of Show Contemporary Antique Decoy and Best of Show Youth will be photographed by the Ward Foundation before the carver leaves for the day.

ENTRY FEE -----

Fees: \$20 for the first entry, \$4 for each additional entry. There is no limit on the number of entries.

MAIL-IN INFORMATION-----

Mail-in entries are welcome please email kclattenburg@wardfdn.org to let us know you are mailing in an entry.

A prepaid return shipping label or check for shipping must be included with your entries (PLEASE NO STAMPS). Mail-in entries must be received no later than October 5th. In-person drop-off is available by making an appointment. There will be registration on the day of the event from 8:30 am until 10 a.m.

Please download a registration form and include it with your entry fee. www.wardfdn.org, kclattenburg@wardfdn.org

Please contact us if you have issues downloading the forms. The Ward Foundation and the hosting entity are not responsible for any damage to mail-in birds (received & sent). The Ward Foundation and hosting entity are not responsible for any damage to any decoy while it is entered in the competition.



ALL MAIL IN ENTRIES: USPS, FedEx, and UPS for mail in address please email kclattenburg@wardfdn.org

This event is sponsored in part by:

Knotts Knives, The Refuge Inn, Rich & Ross Smoker, Bennett Scott, Ed Rogan, Doug Fisher, and Friend of George R. Root, Karl & Deb Yankey, Delmarva University of Making Birds